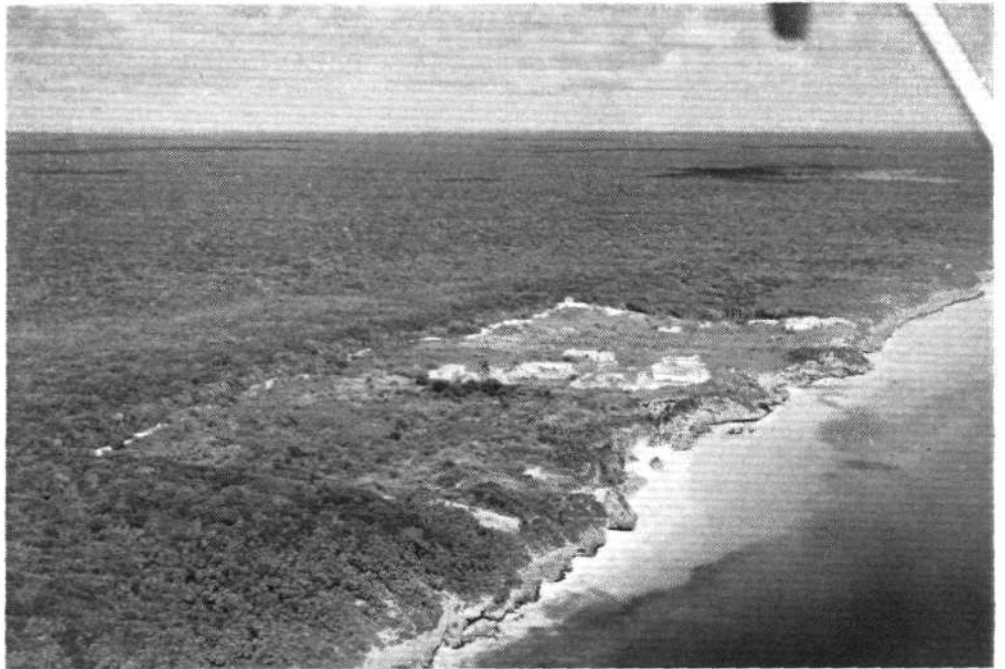


Backed by hundreds of miles of almost impenetrable virgin forest, the Ruins of Tulum are clearly visible in the open space facing the sea on the East Coast of Yucatan.



low, to fly alternately high and then low. Thus, during the short period when we were down, we would all take a quick look around, and, if no ruins were seen, go up again. If a pyramid did show up on the horizon, we would change our compass course, make a note of our shift in course and fly low until we reached the new temple, when we would make a note of its location.

On the afternoon of December 4, we flew cross-country from Cozumel to Merida, via Coba, locating and taking photographs of the old Mayan Causeways, 1,500 years old, which lead west from the lakes at Coba. These causeways we photographed for the first time. This was possible only by virtue of the fact that we flew over them late in the day, when the shadow caused by the raised roadways was thrown to one side by the setting sun. On this flight we located several new temples, and ultimately landed at Merida, in Yucatan, in the south-east part of Mexico.

Upon our arrival at Merida, the Mexican authorities promptly confiscated all the cameras, despite the fact that we had permission to photograph. We had visions of continuing the remainder of the trip without any photographic record of new temples discovered. However, the next morning they had relented, and returned all our equipment to us.

In order accurately to check our compass bearings at all times, we found it necessary, before making a flight, to lay out what we believed would be the course we would fly, and then, when flying, make notations of the compass bearings, allowing for deviation and variations. Quite frequently, however, while flying low, we would locate a new temple and fly to it, necessitating an unscheduled change in course. In order to overcome the difficulty

thus incurred, we would, before taking off, synchronise all our watches and all write in notebooks. Then, whenever a course was changed in flight, we were always notified of a new course, and all of us entered our observations in the different books. In this way, at the end of the day, we could all get together and from our notations plot our course on the map, and then, in turn, plot all our observations on the map. In this way we could locate topographical features and Mayan ruins very accurately.

We hopped off again on the morning of December 5, covering much more territory than we anticipated. Flying over Uxmal, Kabah, we headed for a lake in the centre of Yucatan, immediately north of the ruin of Elemax. Much to our surprise, however, after we had flown on the correct compass course for half an hour more than was supposedly necessary, no lake turned up underneath; it had completely vanished from the face of the earth. The next landmark we saw was Lake Bacalar, which is on the east coast of Yucatan. As soon as we sighted this body of water, we swung about and headed for the Isle of Carmen, our next stop. By careful calibration of our distance and compass bearings, we estimated that we could reach Carmen safely on the remaining petrol in our tanks. But, when about three-quarters of the way to Carmen, we encountered a strong head wind, which made us wonder whether we should be forced to land in the lagoon without reaching our destination. However, we did reach there safely just at sundown, making a smooth landing on the airport maintained at that point by the Mexican Aviation Company.

*(To be concluded next week.)*



Usumacinta River—at Yaxchilan.